

Posted by Erick Erickson

Some of you may have already seen their op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, but three conservatives in the House, Congressmen Jeb Hensarling (TX), Mike Pence (IN), and **John Campbell (CA)**

introduced a constitutional amendment today to control spending by limiting it to one-fifth of the economy. The Spending Limit Amendment would keep spending as a percentage of GDP at the historical average since World War II, as it is set to more than double in the years ahead. There is an in-depth look [here](#).

The idea is to force a debate on the size and scope of the federal government now and gain a political will for a national budget of sorts. As they explained on C-SPAN yesterday morning, after years of battling against spending against both Republicans and Democrats, and offering specific proposals and budgets, they believe it is important to give the public a goal and to define what is fiscally sustainable, and what is not, and then get political buy-in. If Republicans manage to win back control of Congress, a proposal like this will give us a yardstick by which to keep their budgets accountable and ensure that they don't sell us down the river again.

For those of us who are also fans of the Balanced Budget Amendment, here is their logic in pursuing one that focuses only on spending. Spending is the real problem for those of us who believe in limited government-not taxes-and focusing on a Balanced Budget Amendment too often allows liberals to participate in the discussion without being serious about controlling spending. Now good conservatives have offered a Balanced Budget Amendment (and specifically ensure in the text of their proposal that taxes couldn't be raised)-and I'll continue to support those proposals as well-but I think the logic of focusing the electorate on spending is very sound because it is more clear cut.

Many in the political and policy establishment will scoff at this proposal, but the Spending Limit Amendment is a new, bold initiative that deserves the support of every member who calls themselves a conservative. Here is a both a one page and an extensive description of the proposal that is well worth a read. Learn about it, and then call your member and ask them to sign on to the plan.